

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06 OES-06
SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 FEA-01 PA-01
PRS-01 /100 W

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R 281046Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3713

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN ENGY PINS ET

SUBJ: ETHIOPIAN PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENTS

REFS: A. ADDIS ABABA 2372 B. ADDIS ABABA 2382

1. PETROLEUM INDUSTRY SOURCES HAVE CONFIRMED THAT DAMAGE FROM INSURGENT ATTACK ON ASSAB REFINERY COMPLEX WAS LIMITED TO A HANDFUL OF STORAGE TANKS AS REPORTED REF B. FIVE STORAGE TANKS WERE HIT BY SMALL ARMS FIRE BUT ONLY ONE, CONTAINING JET B AVIATION FUEL, CAUGHT ON FIRE. THAT TANK WAS APPARENTLY COMPLETELY DESTROYED BY FIRE WHILE OTHER FOUR TANKS CONTAINING GASOLINE SUFFERED PUNCTURE DAMAGE AND LEAKAGE BUT HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN PATCHED AND ARE NOW USABLE. REFINERY ITSELF WAS NOT DAMAGED.

2. REFINERY HAD BEEN CLOSED DOWN APRIL 20 FOR NORMAL ANNUAL OVERHAUL. REFINERY WILL BEGIN OPERATIONS AGAIN ON MAY 10 AS SCHEDULED. STOCKS OF PETROLEUM SUPPLIES IN THE COUNTRY ARE ADEQUATE AND IN CASE OF GASOLINE AND JET B, ALMOST EXCESSIVE.

3. DR. ASHAGRE YIGLETU, MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, HELD BRIEF MEETING WITH PETROLEUM DISTRIBUTION COMPANY REPS
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APRIL 25. ASHAGRE DID NOT MENTION ASSAB REFINERY ATTACK BUT RATHER REEMPHASIZED PETROLEUM COMPANIES MUST GIVE PRIORITY ATTENTION TO HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO FILL ALL SERVICE STATIONS ON TWO KEY NORTHERN ROADS AS REPORTED REF A. ASHAGRE ALSO INFORMED INDUSTRY THAT PETROLEUM PRODUCT CONSUMPTION IN ADDIS ABABA WOULD BE CUT THROUGH TIGHTENED RATIONING SYSTEM. ASHAGRE WAS FORCED TO LEAVE MEETING WITHOUT COMPLETELY EX-

PLAINING HIS RATIONING PLANS BUT HIS OFFICE ISSUED ORDERS TO INDUSTRY REDUCING DISTRIBUTION ALLOCATIONS QUOTAS FOR ALL CLASSES OF CONSUMERS BY AN AVERAGE OF 20 PERCENT. THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHANGE IN RATIONING SYSTEM AND GASOLINE STATIONS ARE FUNCTIONING AS NORMAL IN ADDIS ABABA. ASHAGRE HAS INBXUOSTED DESIRE FOR ANOTHER, LONGER MEETING WITH PETROLEUM INDUSTRY REPS TO DISCUSS DISTRIBUTION SITUATION AND OTHER MATTERS IN DETAIL. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY IMPORTANT CHANGES WILL BE INSTITUTED IN CURRENT DISTRIBUTION AND RATIONING SYSTEMS PRIOR TO SUCH MEETING.

4. COMMENT : ANY TIGHTENING OF PETROLEUM RATIONING IN ADDIS ABABA WOULD BE UNRELATED TO ASSAB REFINERY INCIDENT. IT WOULD MORE LIKELY BE RELATED TO PLANS FOR MAJOR MOVEMENT OF MEN AND MATERIAL AS REPORTED PARA 3, REF A. DR. ASHAGRE WAS REPORTEDLY FRANTICALLY SEEKING 4000 FIFTY-FIVE GALLON DRUMS ON APRIL 28 TO BE CUT IN HALF AND USED AS COOKING POTS. TIENKEN

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